

Preschool Programs

Parent Handbook



Shrewsbury Public Schools

2007-2008

Mission Statement:

We are teachers of young children within a diverse community. We encourage each child to question, to wonder, and to explore his or her environment. We foster growth by imparting to each child the ability to make responsible decisions. We recognize that every child has the ability to succeed. It is our mission to provide them with the tools with which success can be achieved.

Philosophy

Our program offers a balance of teacher-directed and child-directed activities. A flexible yet consistent schedule allows our teachers to meet the individual needs of each child. We recognize that all children grow and develop at various rates. Opportunities to develop social, physical, emotional, and cognitive skills are embedded in all preschool activities. We are dedicated to building self-esteem, encouraging problem solving, and developing creative opportunities that enhance the growth and development of each child. Process, but not perfection, is valued at our preschool. We understand that children learn through repeated experiences, socialization, play, and interactions with people and materials. We strive to take advantage of natural learning situations. We emphasize active hands on exploration and focus on helping children learn about themselves and the world around them through play and discovery.

Parent involvement is welcomed and encouraged. There are many opportunities for families to participate in the education of their child. We offer parent occupation days, field trips and class projects. Frequent communication, the sharing of talents and ideas, and the development of trust between staff and parents are key objectives in our efforts to establish a positive home-school relationship.

Program Description: Parker Road Preschool

The Parker Road Preschool offers 13 half-day preschool sessions and 2 half-day pre-kindergarten sessions in which families can enroll their children. Preschool Sessions are 2 1/2 hours in length and include a 2-day morning, 3-day morning, and 4-day afternoon placements. Pre-kindergarten sessions are also 2 1/2 hours in length and include a 4-day morning and 4-day afternoon placement. Morning sessions run from 8:30-11:00 and afternoon sessions run from 12:00 – 2:30. These times may change from year to year. Each preschool classroom is mixed-age and includes 3, 4, and 5 year olds. The pre-kindergarten classes include 4 and 5 year olds. Class size is limited to 15 students with one certified teacher and 1-2 classroom assistants. Ratios of typically developing students to special needs students varies yearly but may never exceed 8:7. Students with special needs attend preschool according to special education regulations and their Individual Education Plan. The Parker Road Preschool also houses the Early Learning Center which is a Special Education program designed for learners with Autism and similar disabilities who are in need of a more specialized teaching approach than can be implemented solely in an integrated setting.

Program Description: Little Colonials Preschool

The Little Colonials Preschool is a component of the Child Development Program at Shrewsbury High School. The High School setting provides enrichment opportunities for the preschool children by offering an extended community of high school students and staff members. The Little Colonials Preschool offers a 3 day morning session from 8:15-10:45 and a 3 day afternoon session from 11:30 – 2:00. These times may change from year to year. Each classroom is mixed-age and include 3, 4, and 5 year olds. Class size is limited to 15 students with one certified teacher and 1 classroom assistants. Ratios of typically developing students to special needs students varies yearly but may never exceed 11:4. Students with special needs attend preschool according to special education regulations and their Individual Education Plan.

Sample Daily Schedule

8:30 – 9:00	Free Play
9:00 – 9:20	Meeting
9:20 – 10:00	Centers
10:00-10:15	Snack
10:00-10:45	Playground/Outside
10:45-11:00	Closing Circle

Enrollment Policy

Lottery forms for all programs are available at the School Department in the Town Hall from December 1 – January 31. All application forms must be returned by January 31st. Age requirements are as follows:

Preschool

2 day AM	3 by July 1 st
3 day AM	3 by March 1 st
3 day PM	3 by March 1 st
4 day PM	3 by March 1 st

Prekindergarten

4 day AM	4 by March 1 st
4 day PM	4 by March 1 st

The lottery drawing will be held during the month of February, and televised live on Cable Channel 29. Parents are also notified in writing of their child's placement. A nonrefundable registration fee is required upon receipt of placement notification. Children not selected in the lottery will be placed on a waiting list. As preschool openings arise, both prior and during the school year, parents of children on the waiting list will be contacted.

Preschool Screening

All children enrolled for preschool participate in a Preschool Screening process which is a brief assessment of language, cognitive and motor development. Results of screening do not impact enrollment and are kept confidential. Only staff working directly with your child have access to screening results which are maintained in your child's student record file. A letter describing the screening process and your child's results is sent home within two weeks of the screening appointment. Most children are screened prior to the start of the school year. Children enrolled after the general enrollment period will be screened during the school year.

Tuition

Tuition is payable in nine equal installments due on the 15th of each month. Refunds may not be made for illness, holidays, or weather conditions. A late fee of \$5.00 will be charged for each week after the 15th of the month that tuition is not received. A snack fee is also charged each month. Tuition agreements, booklets and payment instruction will be sent at the start of the school year.

Tuition rates are:

- 2 day session: \$1,364.00/year
- 3 day session \$1,771.00/year
- 4 day session \$2,126.00/year

Snack rates are:

2 day session: \$46.80/year

3 day session: \$70.20/year

4 day session: \$93.60/year

(A 10% discount will be given for siblings attending during the same program year.)

Payment must be mailed or dropped off at the front office. **DO NOT SEND PAYMENT IN YOUR CHILD'S BACKPACK.** We cannot be responsible for lost checks sent in backpacks.

Tuition Support

The Shrewsbury Public Preschool Programs participate in the Shrewsbury Community Partnership for Children Program (SCPC) which provides tuition assistance for income qualified families. Please contact the SCPC office at (508) 842-9078 for further information.

Qualifying Criteria:

- Both parents working or 1 parent in single parent household
- Child is 2.9 – 5 years but not yet in Kindergarten
- Family resides in Shrewsbury

Financial assistance may also be available through the Shrewsbury Public Schools for families that qualify. Please contact the Program Director for further information.

Withdrawal

Notification of withdrawal from either preschool program must be submitted in writing to your child's preschool four weeks prior to the withdrawal date. If your family takes an extended vacation and you wish to secure your child's placement in the program, you are still responsible for tuition payment during this vacation period.

In the event of withdrawal without four weeks written notification, you will be responsible for payment of the subsequent month's tuition.

Change of Address, Telephone Number or Name

In order for us to have up-to-date information in case of an emergency, etc., please notify the school as soon as possible if there is any change of parent's, guardian's, or student's address, telephone number or last name. It is imperative that the school is able to reach you during school hours.

Arrival and Dismissal

Little Colonials Preschool

Please bring your child directly to the classroom for each session, and be sure that teachers know you have arrived. Children may not be dropped off before the designated time as teachers have other scheduled commitments outside of the classroom.

Parker Road Preschool

The Parker Road Preschool uses a Looping System for child drop off and pick up. Parents should drive slowly (15 mph) around to the back entrance of the building, forming a line of cars. Parents should remain in their cars. Children will be escorted from their cars to the classroom. Every effort is put towards making drop off/pick up run as smoothly and safely as possible. We ask that you keep discussions with staff to a minimum to create an efficient process. Staff are happy to give you a call or e-mail after school and are available to meet by appointment. We also must insist that proper car restraint systems (car seat, booster seat, seat belts) are used for all passengers and cell phones are not used during drop-off/pick-up.

Separation Anxiety

The most effective way to support your child during separation is to work with the classroom teacher. Let her know if the behavior is typical or new and share strategies that have worked for you in the past. If your child attends Little Colonials or if you have been asked to walk your child into school at Parker road, a good rule of thumb is to stay only for a few minutes, to say “see you soon” and then allow the teachers to take and comfort your child. It can be difficult to leave when your child is upset but this will help with your child’s adjustment to a new experience. Typically, children are happily playing within a short period of time. Teachers can call you or you can call the school just to be sure your child has settled in.

Dismissal

Little Colonials

AM – Children will be escorted to their parent’s car at the end of the morning session (10:45 am).

PM – Parents will come to the hallway outside of the classroom to pick up their child

Please be prompt for dismissal

Children become anxious when parents are delayed, and teachers have other scheduled commitments at the end of the preschool session. If you find that you have an unavoidable situation and know you are going to be late, please call the school so that plans for supervision of your child can be made.

Authorization for Release of Your Child

If you need to have your child released to another adult beside yourself, you will need to provide written permission. Persons other than the parents will be asked for identification. If you will be arranging for a consistent caregiver to pick up your child throughout the year, written permission is required just one time before this arrangement is to be started. We will keep this authorization on file.

School Cancellations

The school calendar enclosed in this booklet indicates planned school closings. School cancellations due to weather are announced on the television (channels 4,5, & 7) and radio (WTAG-AM, 580; WBZ-AM, 1030; WSRS-FM, 96.1) beginning at 6:00 AM.

Cancellation of Kindergarten sessions due to inclement weather applies to Preschool as well.

Weather Delay: Parker Road Preschool

The school department may announce a delay of the opening of school. This is also broadcast on the above television and radio stations. If the announcement indicates more than a 1 hour delay, morning preschool is cancelled. The announcement may also cancel PM preschool. Dismissal times will remain the same as on a regular day.

Weather Delay: Little Colonials Preschool

The Little Colonials Preschool Morning Session is cancelled whenever there is a delay at the High School.

Snack Program

Snack time is an important activity in the Preschool Program. Teachers use this time to model and talk with the children about healthy eating habits and good table manners. Both the Parker Road Preschool Program and Little Colonials offer a nutritious snack program. Due to food allergies, all food items for snack time in the preschool classroom must be offered only through the Food Service Department. Food items from home are

prohibited. This insures that all ingredients have been screened and approved for distribution and consumption by all students. If your child needs a special diet or has food allergies and accommodations need to be made for snack, please see the Program Director.. Please contact the Program Director for more information. A reduced snack fee is available for those in need. School snack fee varies according to session and is approximately .65 cents per day.

Birthday Celebration

Birthdays will be celebrated on or near the child's actual birthdate. Due to food allergies, we cannot allow foods to be sent in for celebration. Ways in which we enjoy celebrating birthdays include making the child a special birthday crown and singing happy birthday with classmates. In order to avoid hurt feelings, we cannot distribute birthday party invitations at school. A permission slip for release of contact information will be given out so that a student directory can be made available to you.

Food Policy

With the growing number of multiple food allergies, the Shrewsbury Public School system has adopted a strict policy in sending food items in to the school. Food items brought into the preschool for any type of school-sponsored events or for use in curriculum-based activities must be cleared with the Preschool Director and/or School Nurse at least one week prior to the scheduled event.

Personal Belongings and safety

Each child will need to bring a spare set of clothes, packaged in a plastic bag to be stored at school for Little Colonials and in his/her backpack for Parker Road. Please include a pair of underwear, a shirt, a pair of pants, and socks. Please label the bag in which you store your child's clothes and initial tags on the clothes. For your child's safety, please do not send your child with a necklace or garment with drawstrings.

Your child will be digging, painting, exploring textures, gluing, pouring, etc. Please dress your child in clothes appropriate for these activities. Although we use smocks we get very messy! We cannot be responsible, nor will we replace clothes that have been soiled during your child's play and learning experience here.

Every child will need a backpack, which should be brought to school each day. The backpack should be large enough to hold the child's "work" from school each day, plus clothing. Backpacks that zipper tend to be the easiest for preschoolers to manage.

Outside Play

Outdoor play is an integral component of the preschool program. Children will play outside daily, weather permitting. It is extremely important to send your child to school dressed in appropriate outerwear (jacket, boots, mittens, snowpants, etc) and to apply sunblock to your child before their arrival to preschool.

Toys from Home

Generally, toys from home interfere with children's ability to share, therefore, we ask that all toys be left at home.

Shrewsbury Public Schools has a policy prohibiting weapons and toys that resemble weapons on school property. If a child brings a weapon or a toy that resembles a weapon to preschool, parents will be called to take the child home for the rest of the session.

Toileting

Children still learning to use the toilet will be encouraged to do so in a supportive and positive manner. Training will be done in conjunction with parents in a manner that is consistent with the child's physical and emotional abilities. All children will be allowed to use the toilet.

Children who are learning to be self-sufficient in the bathroom will have an easier time if they wear clothing that they can pull on and off themselves.

Discipline and Anti-Bullying Policy

The Preschool programs provide a safe and nurturing environment for all children to learn. Clear routines and expectations, teamwork and logical consequences are strategies used to create a positive and respectful school environment. If a disciplinary issue persists or is of concern, you will be notified and the issue discussed through phone call or parent conference.

Parent Involvement

Reaching the classroom teacher

Please feel free to contact your child's teacher via email or telephone. Teachers check their email and voicemail before and after each classroom session. A listing of staff contact information is included in the parent handbook. Teachers can also be reached by calling the main office when immediate attention is needed. (508) 841 - 8646

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parents or teachers may request a conference at any time during the year. If you wish to initiate a conference, you may do so by calling the classroom teacher or by sending a note in your child's backpack. An initial parent-teacher conference will be scheduled during the first quarter of the school year.

When Parents Have a Concern

The school welcomes the opportunity to assist you and your child in having a successful experience in our programs. Should your family have a school concern or problem, the school must be notified. Contacting the right person and discussing your concerns can solve most problems. Generally the best place to begin to solve an issue is with the source, most often by contacting the classroom teacher. In the event that you are not satisfied with the solution or are unable to resolve an issue you should then contact the program director.

Visiting the school

Parents are welcome visitors to the preschool program. Please call the school in advance to schedule your visit; otherwise we could have a room full of adults! Parents wishing to observe their child's classroom must be accompanied by a teacher, program coordinator or Director.

Volunteering

Volunteering in the Shrewsbury Public Schools is a time-honored tradition. School volunteers are always in demand and perform a variety of functions such as participating in the classroom, presenting special projects, working in the main office, and preparing materials for teachers and students. Interested parents will receive volunteer orientation and training at the beginning of the year.

PTO at the Parker Road Preschool

Each elementary school has an active parent organization, complete with monthly meetings and a slate of officers and sub-committees. These organizations provide the school with educational, social and fund raising activities. Getting involved is a good way to be of service to your school and ultimately to your child.

The Parker Road Preschool has a wonderful school program that is due in large part to the commitment of dedicated parents who volunteer their time to the PTO. The PTO Executive Committee meets monthly and General Meeting for all parents is scheduled bi-monthly. The PTO strives to enrich the students' preschool experience through special school events, classroom volunteers, and purchasing school materials. The PTO also focuses on enriching the parents school experience through parent workshops and gatherings throughout the school year.

Your child's records

All information contained in each child's file is strictly confidential, and will not be given to other parties without parental consent. The child's records will be on file in the school where he or she attends. If you wish to review your child's records please schedule an appointment with the program director.

Child Health & Safety

Immunization Records

In accordance with the laws of the state of Massachusetts, no child will be admitted to school without proof of full immunizations. You must have this information available before the first day of school. Please note that as of 1999, all children entering Preschool must be immunized against chicken pox or be able to demonstrate proof of history of the illness from their health care provider.

Physical Exam Record

We must receive record of a physical examination completed within the past year for each child entering preschool. Because of the limits placed by some insurers, we extended the deadline for this to the end of the calendar year. After that time, we are required to exclude the child until this information is provided.

Medication Policy

The Town of Shrewsbury has a firm policy that prohibits preschool students from carrying any medication on the school bus or in their backpacks. This policy is strictly enforced to ensure the safety of all the children. If your child needs to take medication during the school day, the following procedures must be followed:

1. All medications (including over the counter medications) must be brought to school in a labeled pharmacy bottle. When the prescription is being filled, ask the pharmacist to divide the medication into two bottles. The pharmacist will comply if you explain that one is for the school nurse. It is expected that the parent will bring this medication to the school nurse.
2. If your child's pediatrician prescribes medications to be administered on a daily basis during school hours, the doctor must fill out a Medication Consent Form. Once the form is completed the school nurse will be able to dispense the medication during school hours. Please bring the consent form with the medication to the nurse's office. Please call the nurse in advance so that she will expect you.
3. Clear and accurate information exchange between the nurse and parents regarding the times/dosage for home and school dispensation of medication is very important. This will ensure safe dispensation of the medication.

Illness and attendance at school

Children who are in need of medical attention will be escorted to the school nurse. All visits to the school nurse are recorded and dated. The nurse's office contains adequate First Aid supplies, which are readily available.

Good attendance at school is always encouraged; however, a sick child should stay home. The decision to keep your child at home is sometimes a difficult one. If your child has had a high temperature, has vomited, or has had diarrhea the night before/or the morning of Preschool, they should stay home to recover. Children, who have a temperature over 100 degrees, have vomited or have diarrhea at school, will be dismissed. Children with strep throat or conjunctivitis (pink eye) must be on antibiotics for twenty-four (24) hours before they may return to school.

If your child has had a medical emergency during the night or during the weekend, they will need a note from their physician in order to return to school.

Absenteeism -- Parker Road

In the event that your child is going to be absent from school, parents are required to call the mainline (508-841-8646) and report the absence before 8:30 a.m. (morning session) and 12:00 p.m. (afternoon session). Parents will be called for any child not in attendance that has not called the main line. **When calling, please give the child's name, the teacher's name, the session he/she attends and a reason for the absence.** All absences must be reported to the Department of Education.

In the event that your child is injured or seriously ill and will be absent for an extended length of time, please contact the school nurse at (508-841-8669). The school nurse will verify the absences and assist parents in communicating the illness to the child's teacher.

Tardiness – Parker Road

If you are late arriving with your child, please use the front entrance to bring your child into school. Check in at the front office. A staff member will bring your child to his/her classroom.

Early Dismissal – Parker Road

If a child need to be dismissed before his/her session ends, written or telephone contact should be made to notify your child's teacher. Parents must check in at the preschool office before a child can be dismissed.

Medical Emergencies at School

In the event of a serious medical concern the student will be transported to the home, doctor, clinic, or hospital as required using the parent's automobile, an ambulance, or requested police assistance.

Abuse & Neglect

Staff who suspects abuse or neglect of a child will immediately report it to the Director of Preschool Programs.

The Director of Preschool Programs will investigate the situation and will immediately notify the Department of Social Services if needed.

If a 51a report has been filed alleging abuse/neglect of a child while in the care of the preschool, the Director of Preschool Programs will notify the Department of Social Services The preschool will cooperate in any investigation

Emergency Evacuation

Centers will be evacuated according to already established evacuation procedures. Program Directors will carry cellular phones, emergency cards, and medical bag. Fire drills and safety drills (lockdown) are held periodically throughout the school year.

Child Restraint Systems – Parker Road

Parents are responsible for being sure that the appropriate child restraint is installed in their car(s). Children will not be placed in a car without the appropriate child restraint. Children 1-4 years of age weighing 20-40 pounds must be placed in a forward facing restraint. Children 4-8 years of age weighing 40-80 pounds must be placed in a booster seat. As a service, preschool staff will buckle your child into the appropriate car seat or booster seat. It is the parent's ultimate responsibility to make sure your child is properly secured.

Safety Policy

Centers follow a written and agreed upon Safety Policy regarding all visitors. This policy states:

- All Visitors **MUST** enter from the Front Door
- Back doors will be locked at all times with the exception of student arrival and student dismissal
- All Visitors must sign in using the "Visitor's book" at the front desk.
- All Visitors must wear a visitor's badge (this includes parent volunteers, parents waiting in speech therapy waiting area, parents on site for observations or meetings).
- Visitors will be escorted to their destination by a preschool staff member.
- Visitors are not allowed past the front desk without a staff escort.
- Students are supervised at all times.
- Students are only allowed in the hallways with adult supervision.
- Parker Road Preschool's front entrance is occasionally locked if staff are away from the front office. Ring doorbell for assistance.

Parking – Parker Road

Parking for the Parker Road Preschool can be found in our front and side lot. We share the facility with the Shrewsbury Electric Light and Cable Company and Special Education Department. Please be aware of reserved parking spots for those agencies (See map attached).

PRESCHOOL STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION

Mary Lammi	Director of Preschool Programs	(508) 841-8646
mlammi@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us		
Patricia Degon	Dir. Of Family and Consumer Science	(508) 841-8835
pdegon@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us		
Sarah Monica	Classroom Teacher	(508) 841-2052
smonica@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us		
Kara Vincelette	Classroom Teacher	(508) 841-8300 x4217
kvincelette@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us		
Jenna Roxo	Classroom Teacher	(508) 841-8300 x4218
jroxo@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us		
Jennifer Vangel	Classroom Teacher	(508) 841-8300 x4216
jvangel@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us		
Melissa Johnson	Classroom Teacher	(508) 841-8300 x4219
mjohnson@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us		
Cynthia Mietkiewicz	Classroom Teacher	(508) 841-8300 x4208
cmietkiewicz@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us		
Kristin Connolly	eLC Program Coordinator	(508) 841-8300 x8667
kconnolly@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us		
Bridget Nichols	eLC Program Coordinator	(508) 841-8300 x8790
brnichols@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us		
Patriica Quinn	Speech Therapist	(508) 841-8300 x4210
pquinn@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us		
Deborah Quinn	Speech Therapist	(508) 841-8300
dquinn@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us		
Arlena Boyle	Speech Therapist	(508) 841-8300 x8759
aboyle@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us		
Maria Grimshaw	Speech Therapist	(508) 841-8300 x4212
mgrimshaw@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us		
Maria Reardon	Psychologist	(508) 841-8300 x4215
mreardon@shrewsbury.k12.ma.us		